THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed..." Peter Maurin

August/September 2010 **Price: For whatever it's worth**

Speak Out Against Bigotry

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In August, 1993, I found myself waiting in line at the post office in Split, Croatia. I was there as part of an international peace effort called Mir Sada ("Peace Now" in Serbo-Croatian). Yugoslavia was breaking up. Slovenia was the first to declare its independence, followed by Croatia. Bosnia proclaimed itself a multi-ethnic state and was being dismembered by Serbs and Croats. Millions of people were displaced, over 97,000 killed. The peace activists from 18 countries who made up Mir Sada hoped to set up a peace camp in the no-man's land surrounding Sarajevo, the besieged capital of Bosnia.

Although this lofty goal was my broad purpose for being in the Adriatic port city, my specific purpose at that moment in Croatia was to buy a stamp to send a postcard to my wife. While waiting in line, I asked an English-speaking native next to me, "What's the best way to say 'thank you' in Serbo-Croatian?" A stony silence fell upon the entire room until my formerly-friendly neighbor said, "There is no such language. We speak Croatian." Fair enough. I pressed on, "So how do you say 'thank you' in Croatian?" "Hvala," she replied. But I couldn't let it go there, so I asked, "And how do they say it in Serbia?" Everyone looked a bit sheepish because the Serbs also say "hvala."

This exchange highlighted for me the insanity of the Bosnian war. Serbs, Croats, and Muslims coexisted in Yugoslavia, despite significant favoritism toward Serbs. In 1990 almost 4 million Yugoslavians, 13.6% of the population, came from mixed marriages. By 1993, millions of neighbors, family members, and friends were fighting a ferocious war against one another, a war which was defined by a euphemism for genocide, "ethnic cleansing."

Overlapping the Bosnian nightmare was the Rwandan Genocide and the ethnic displacement of Palestinians by Israelis. Tutsis and Hutus, indistinguishable Africans to outsiders, found their identities a matter of life and death. Palestine, a land where Jews and Muslims had lived in peace for over a thousand years, found itself divided by race and religion into Jewish communities of wealth and power versus Arab communities of poverty and oppression. The irony of this division is that it is occurring in a land both communities call holy.

Lois & Lars Hokanson

In 2004, as part of a Catholic Worker Peace Team, I saw the insanity of human bigotry ravage Darfur, Sudan, where people who shared the same religion were nonetheless ripped apart by their identification of themselves as Arab or African. As an outsider, I could see no difference between the sides and yet, almost a half a million Africans had been killed and two million displaced. And now, in 2010, 80,000 Uzbeks have fled their homes in Kyrgyzstan where thousands were killed in orchestrated attacks by Kyrgyz militias and troops.

What causes a relatively affluent and educated country like Yugoslavia, a nation which hosted the Winter Olympics games in 1984, to devolve seven years later into an

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We Go On Record

by Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: Published in the September 1945 issue of The Catholic Worker, *this article appeared weeks after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Dorothy was one of the first Americans to condemn the bombings. It took enormous faith and courage to do so at that time.*

Mr. Truman was jubilant. True man; what a strange name, come to think of it. We refer to Jesus Christ as true God and true Man. Truman is a true man of his time in that he was jubilant. He was a not a son of God, brother of Christ, brother of the Japanese, jubilating as he did. He went from table to table on the cruiser which was bringing him home from the Big Three conference, telling the great news; "jubilant" the newspapers said. Jubilate Deo. We have killed 318,000 Japanese.

That is, we hope we have killed them, the Associated Press, on page one, column one of *The Herald Tribune* says. The effect is hoped for, not known. It is to be hoped they are vaporized, our Japanese brothers scattered, men, women, and babies, to the four winds, over the seven seas. Perhaps we will breathe their dust into our nostrils, feel them in the fog of New York on our faces, feel them in the rain on the hills of Easton.

Jubilate Deo. President Truman was jubilant. We have created. We have created destruction. We have created a new element, called Pluto [plutonium, named after the god of death]. Nature had nothing to do with it.

"A cavern below Columbia was the bomb's cradle," born not that men might live, but that men might be killed. Brought into being in a cavern, and then tried in a desert place, in the midst of tempest and lightning, tried out, and then again on the eve of the Feast of

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Speak Out

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ethnic charnel house? What causes Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land, believers in the same merciful God, to tear each other apart? How can human beings become so alienated from each other?

History, religion, politics, and economics are often blamed for the transformation of ordinary people into monsters who kill displace and kill their neighbors. But I believe that leap is engineered and escalated by greedy and ambitious cynics. The Nazis rode to power on the backs of anti-semitism. The affluent Jewish state of Israel was secured by the displacement of 800,000 Palestinians. Croatian and Serbian nationalists seized political power by recalling 50-year-old atrocities from World War II and 700-year-old wounds from wars with Islam. The road to ethnic and racial violence is usually gradual, but, during hard economic times, can be short and steep. Communities can go insane with alarming speed.

This is why Americans need to be especially vigilant. Here in Massachusetts, on May 27, after Governor Deval Patrick met with representatives of the Bay State Muslim community and promised "cultural awareness training" for police, he was denounced for "political correctness run amok" by Treasurer Timothy Cahill, an independent candidate for governor. Pointing out that his daughter lives near Times Square, the site of a recent bomb attempt, Cahill went on to say that "Governor Patrick should stop playing politics with terrorism and focus on protecting the citizens of this commonwealth." Governor Patrick's visit to the Islamic Cultural Center in Roxbury was one of many similar visits he has made to various ethnic and religious groups this year. His promise to work to end racial profiling and discrimination against Muslims was consistent with what his aides called Patrick's "lifelong commitment to civil and human rights." Cahill's comments were condemned the next day on the steps of the Roxbury mosque by prominent Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim leaders. Rev. Hurmon Hamilton, president of the interfaith organization and pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church said, "Not in Massachusetts! No bigotry!" Rabbi Eric Gurvis of Temple Shalom in Newton said that members of the Islamic Society were among the first to help when his temple was defaced with a swastika. He called Cahill's remarks an "act of hatred and bigotry." In the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, a spokesperson for the Worcester Islamic Society, Tahir Ali, called Cahill's comments "dishonorable and pitiful."

Unfortunately, Mr. Cahill did not retract his remarks or apologize for them. Even after a closed door meeting with ecumenical religious leaders, the candidate stood by his anti-Islamic charges. Apparently, his advisors believe that bigotry against Muslims plays better at the polls than tolerance.

If we had any doubt that the we were entering into a dangerous time of Muslim-baiting, just three days after Cahill's remarks were denounced as intolerant, the *Telegram & Gazette* ran a cartoon suggesting that New York City's approval of a mosque near ground zero was akin to allowing Muslim street vendors to sell "Authentic 9-11 box cutters autographed by Mohammed Atta." The suggestion that every mosque is a center for terrorism was so offensive to us that we organized a phone tree to complain to the newspaper's editor. To our dismay, he saw nothing offensive in the cartoon and refused to issue an apology to the local Islamic community. There were no subsequent letters to the editor criticizing the cartoon and no ecumenical leaders standing on the steps of the newspaper building denouncing bigotry. I told the editor that the cartoon incited people to believe that all Muslims are terrorists and that, in the current economic, political, and military climate, such accusations were seeds of violence. He wasn't moved. Perhaps like Cahill, who made a political calculation, the editor made an economic one. Anti-Islamic material, just like anti-semitic material in Nazi Germany, sells papers. Scapegoats soothe frayed nerves and deflect attention from genuine economic, military, and political problems.

Julie Lonneman

Yesterday, I went to Concord with my son Aiden to read Henry David Thoreau's **On Walden Pond**. Sitting on a stump overlooking the site of the philosopher's cabin, we read, "It's never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking, however ancient can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow...." (Catholics are slaves of the pope. Jews are money-grubbers. Muslims are terrorists....) The deceit of bigotry is fueled by ignorance and dispelled by knowledge. Let us not let bigotry run amok here in the United States. Get to know people of different religions, nationalities, and cultures. Welcome them. As Thoreau asks, "Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" And finally, when bigotry raises its ugly visage, speak out! For the love of a God, who loves all humanity, speak out! Ω

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The Ordination of Women

by Reverend Roy Bourgeois, M.M.

Editor's Note: Many Catholic Worker communities call for women's ordination; some already host liturgies celebrated by women. Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker supports the call for women's ordination. After all, the Body of Christ, the Incarnation, was first given to us by a woman. Nonetheless, because women's ordination has not yet been approved by the Vatican, we continue to host and attend Mass celebrated only by men.

In 1994, Pope John Paul II, issued an apostolic letter stating: "I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful." The Pontiff's statement, rooted in his conviction that Christ's choice of twelve male apostles takes away the Church's freedom to ordain women, was the strongest Vatican statement short of one declared infallible. Had he spoken ex cathedra *there would have been no mechanism for future popes to reverse this position. In the words of the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, "As things now stand, a future pope has very little wiggle room to change this stance. However, John Paul II stated in his letter that the Church 'has' no authority to ordain women. That does not negate the possibility of the Church obtaining such authority in the future."*

Maryknoll missionary, Father Roy Bourgeois is a leader of the campaign to close the notorious military school at Fort Benning, Georgia where some of Latin America's worst human rights abusers were trained. In 2009, he attended the ordination of a Roman Catholic woman to the priesthood. Later that year, Father Bourgeois was told by the Vatican to recant his public support for the ordination of women. The following is an explanation of why he refuses to do so.

To My Maryknoll Brothers,

You have been my community, my family, for 44 years. Because of my love and respect for you and for Maryknoll, I want to explain, as best I can, why I believe women should be ordained in our Church. After much discernment, I entered Maryknoll and was ordained in 1972. I am grateful to have found the hope, meaning, and joy I was seeking in life.

Grace Duffy

In my ministry over the years, I have met many devout women in our Church who feel called by God to the priesthood, just as we do as men. And why shouldn't they be called? As Catholics, we profess that our all-loving God created men and women of equal worth and dignity. As priests, we all say that the call to the priesthood is a gift and comes from God. My brothers, who are we to reject God's call of women to the priesthood? Who are we, as men, to say that our call from God is valid, but their call, as women, is not? I believe that our all-powerful God, Creator of the universe, is certainly capable of calling women to be priests.

Our Church leaders tell us that women cannot be priests because Jesus chose only male apostles. With all due respect, this is not accurate. As Christians, we know the importance of the Resurrection. It is at the core of our faith. Jesus chose a woman, Mary Magdalene, to be the first witness to His resurrection. She was also chosen to bring "the good news" to the male apostles and became known as "the apostle to the apostles." Galatians 3:28 is very clear: "**There is neither male nor female. In Christ Jesus you are one.**" Furthermore, a 1976 report by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, the Vatican's top scripture scholars, concluded that there is not justification in the New Testament for excluding women from the priesthood.

Reflecting on the scriptures, the love of God, and the many stories I have heard from women over the years about their being called by God, I believe that excluding women from ordination is rooted in sexism. Sexism, like racism, is a sin. And no matter how hard we may try to justify discrimination, in the end, it is always wrong.

Fundamentally, the ordination of women is a matter of justice. At the same time, there are practical benefits to having women priests. As we know, our Church is in a serious crisis. Hundreds of churches are closing because of a shortage of priests. When I entered Maryknoll, we had over 300 seminarians preparing for the priesthood. Today we have eight.

If we are to have a vibrant and healthy Church rooted in the teachings of Jesus, we need the wisdom, compassion, courage, and gifts of women in the priesthood. Like the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, and the right of women to vote, the ordination of women is inevitable because it is just.

Let us be on the right side of history. Our Maryknoll community is well known and respected for its work for justice and the oppressed. My brothers, I respectfully ask that you break your silence and stand in solidarity with the many women in our Church who, like you and me, are called by God to the priesthood. Ω

Upholding the Light of Truth

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

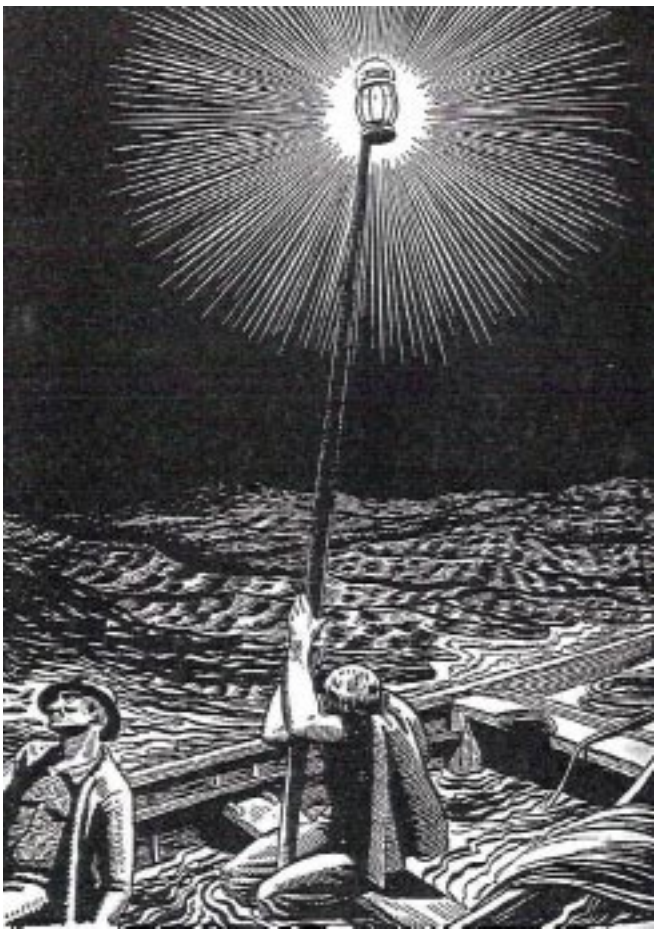
On July 3, 2010, *The Boston Globe* ran an Associated Press article entitled "Some call for Steele's ouster after Afghanistan comments: Criticism swells in GOP because of gaffe on war." The war, said Republican National Chairman Michael Steele was "a war of Obama's choosing... If he's such a student of history, has he not understood that that's one thing you don't do is engage in a land war in Afghanistan? All right? Because everyone who's tried, over a thousand years of history, has failed.... There are other ways to engage in Afghanistan."

Democrats objected to Steele's charge that the war now belongs to President Obama, since President Bush initiated it. Steele's conclusion that a the war in Afghanistan cannot be won militarily drew calls for his resignation from Republican leaders and conservative commentators, one of whom went so far as to say, "He has lost all moral authority to lead the GOP." Nowhere in the AP article was the word "gaffe" called into question or the substance of Steele's comments tested for accuracy.

Certainly President Bush started the war, but President Obama has escalated and championed it. Mr. Steele was wrong on one count. It has actually been over 2,300 years without a country conquering Afghanistan. Alexander the Great spent from 330 until 327 BC attempting to subdue the region. The archeological historian Kristin M. Romney said, "Nowhere else on Alexander the Great's 22,000-mile, 13-year march from Greece to the Punjab did he encounter more difficulties than in Afghanistan." After three years of heavy losses, Alexander married the daughter of the most powerful Afghan warlord, declared the country conquered, took his army, and fled.

Britain lost two wars in Afghanistan, the first between 1839 and 1842, and the second from 1878 until 1880. Six thousand, one hundred and thirty Britons and over 20,000 Afghanis were killed in these futile campaigns.

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and withdrew in defeat in 1989. They lost 14,453 soldiers and killed up to *1.5 million* Afghanis without victory.



Rockwell Kent

And now, the US and its NATO allies have been in Afghanistan for almost nine years without pacifying any sizeable parts of the country. One thousand, one hundred and fifty seven Americans, 746 NATO troops, and another 23,000 Afghanis have been killed. Many more Americans would have been killed were it not for billions of US dollars in bribes paid for protection to brutal, drug-dealing warlords.

And yet, Michael Steele's observations are considered a "gaffe" which may cost him his job. No such threat awaits General David Pretaeus, the new US commander in Afghanistan, who on July 5 said, "We are in this to win." After the bloodiest month for Americans in the longest war in US history with absolutely no end in sight, no one called Pretaeus' remark a gaffe. Politically popular fantasies trump the truth just about any day it seems.

The whirlwind around Steele recalls the anger directed at President Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young. During a speech extolling the President's desire that human rights be at the center of US policy, Young was challenged by another diplomat that if the US was truly sincere about human rights it would apologize for its role in overthrowing the democratically-elected government of Chile. (In the 1973, CIA-instigated, overthrow of Salvador Allende, 30,000 Chileans were killed, including Allende, to impose a US-friendly dictatorship which imprisoned 100,000 political opponents, caused 2,000 more to simply "disappear," and made torture a routine practice.) Young replied, "Perhaps the US should apologize." Calls for his resignation began. They deepened each time he criticized the anti-communist apartheid government of South African and peaked when he said on Meet the Press that Israel was "stubborn and intransigent." He was finally forced out for meeting with the UN observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

After his resignation, Young said, "I don't feel a bit sorry for anything I have done." Steele did not back down either. He insisted that he meant no disrespect or lack of support for US soldiers, but did not parrot the party line that the war in Afghanistan will be won. Steele and Young voiced uncomfortable truths, something that is not prized or practiced often enough in government or in life. Ω

On Record

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the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, on a far off island in the eastern hemisphere, tried out again, this "new weapon conceivably might wipe out mankind, and perhaps the planet itself."

"Dropped on a town, one bomb would be equivalent to a severe earthquake and would utterly destroy the place. A scientific brain trust has solved the problem of how to confine and release of almost unlimited energy. It is impossible yet to measure its effects."

"We have spent two billion on the greatest scientific gamble in history and won," said President Truman jubilantly.

The papers list the scientists (the murderers) who are credited with perfecting this new weapon. One outstanding authority "... was Professor O.E. Lawrence, a Nobel prize winner of the University of California. In the heat of the race to unlock the atom, he built the world's most powerful atom smashing gun.... But such a machine was found in the end to be unnecessary. The atom of Uranium-235 was smashed with surprising ease. Science discovered that not sledge-hammer blows, but subtle taps from slow traveling neutrons managed more on a tuning technique were all that were needed to disintegrate the Uranium-235 atom."

Georges Rouault

(Remember the tales we used to hear, that one note of a violin, if that note could be discovered, could collapse the Empire State Building. Remember too, that God's voice was heard not in the great and strong wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but "**in the whistling of a gentle air**.")

Scientists, army officers, great universities (Notre Dame included), and captains of industry—all were given credit lines in the press for their work of preparing the bomb and other bombs, the President assures us, are in production now.

...This new great force will be used for good, the scientist assured us. And then they wiped out a city of 318,000. This was good. The President was jubilant.

Today's paper with its columns of description of the new era, the atomic era, which this colossal slaughter of the innocents has ushered in, is filled with stories covering every conceivable phase of the new discovery. Pictures of towns and the industrial plants where the parts are made are spread across the pages. In the forefront of the town of Oak Ridge, Tennessee is a chapel, a large comfortable-looking chapel benignly settled beside the plant. The scientists making the first tests in the desert prayed, one newspaper account said.

Yes, God is still in the picture. God is not mocked. Today, the day of this so great news, God made a madman dance and talk, who had not spoken for twenty years. God sent a typhoon to damage the carrier Hornet. God permitted a fog to obscure vision and a bomber crashed into the Empire State Building. God permits these things. We have to remember it. We are held in God's hands, all of us, and President Truman too, and these scientists who have created death, but will use it for good. He, God, holds our life and our happiness, our sanity and our health; our lives are in His hands. He is our Creator.

As I write, Pigsie, who works in Secaucus, New Jersey, feeding hogs, and cleaning out the excrement of the hogs, who comes in once a month to find beauty and surcease and glamour and glory in the drink of the Bowery, trying to drive the hell and smell out of his nostrils and his life, sleeps on our doorstep, in this best and most advanced and progressive of all possible worlds. And as I write, our cat, Rainbow, slinks by with a shrill rat in her jaws, out of the kitchen closet here at Mott Street. Here in this greatest of cities which covered a cavern where this stupendous discovery was made, which institutes an era of unbelievable richness and power and glory for man?

Everyone says, "I wonder what the Pope thinks of it?" How everyone turns to the Vatican for judgment, even though they do not seem to listen to the voice there! But our Lord Himself has already pronounced judgment on the atomic bomb. When James and John wished to call down fire from heaven on their enemies Jesus said: "**You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save.**" He said also, "**What you do unto the least of these my brethren, you do unto me.**" Ω

Vanunu Jailed

by David Polden

Editor's Note: This article appeared in the June/July 2010 newsletter of the London-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu was sentenced to 18 years for "espionage" and "treason" through revealing Israel's nuclear weapons' arsenal to *The Sunday Times*. Released in 2004, he was put under restrictions that continue, including not leaving Israel or talking to foreigners. On 23rd May he began a three-month sentence for breaches of the latter restriction. He was offered the alternative of community service in West Jerusalem, but refused on the grounds it was not safe for him to do so. Indeed, many Israelis consider Vanunu a traitor who should have been executed. Last Christmas he was again charged with the same breach—for talking to his Norwegian girlfriend!

This time, unlike during his 18-year previous sentence, Amnesty International has declared Vanunu a "Prisoner of Conscience."

Ironically, the day after Mordechai returned to prison, documentary evidence was published that corroborated his 1986 revelation. This was uncovered by Sasha Polakow-Suransky in research for his book: **The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's secret alliance with apartheid South Africa**.

The documents include minutes of 1975 meetings that record PW Botha, then South African defence minister, asking for warheads and Shimon Peres, his Israeli counterpart, responding by offering them "in three sizes" as well as nuclear-capable Jericho missiles. Botha said that South Africa wanted the missiles "as a deterrent and for potential strikes against neighboring states"! The deal did not proceed; South Africa eventually produced its own nuclear warheads, very likely with Israeli help in return for Israel being allowed to test its nuclear weapons at South Africa's test site.

This evidence is an embarrassment to Israel's continuing policy of "nuclear ambiguity," whereby it refuses to confirm or deny it has nuclear weapons....

Mordechai Vanunu is being held in solitary confinement in Ayalon Prison, Ramla, Israel. Ω

Letters

Dear Scott, Claire, family, community members, guests, and friends,
Thanks for the *Radical*. Yep, you were right about Michael Webster's poem being pretty negative. I wrote a very negative poem myself recently though, so I guess I can understand it. Also, I was given a surprisingly similar poem to Michael's to read at morning prayer over Easter. So, I guess they're sentiments felt by others too. It's good to acknowledge the hardships, but also to revel in the blossoming fruit trees and other displays of God's beauty to cheer us up.

Jim Consedine's article about Sam, Peter, and Adrian [anti-war activists found not guilty for civil disobedience] was good. We helped Sam plough his garden last week. I really like Sam. He's gentle and quiet, but shows a lot of integrity....

I liked your article on Flag Day, Scott. I thought it was worded well enough that flag worshippers may not immediately discard the article, thus being more likely to get a new perspective. I reckon if I were to write an article about flags, I'd be too negative and would turn off anyone who loved flags, thus just preaching to the choir.

Jonathan's "Taking Away Israel's Car Keys" was interesting. I thought his conclusion was a bit sad. It seemed to imply that the US should muscle in, in a military way. The rest of the article was good.

Mark Seifried's article about standing up for the innocent was good. I guess I'm a bit cynical about commissions really achieving what they set out to do, but it's good to make people more aware of how easy it is to falsely accuse people just because of their race, gender, religion, appearance, socio-economic level, etc. Here in the Hokianga (the region we are in in New Zealand) there's a reputation of people being gangsters and tribal. I think some city people even fear that cannibalism is still practised! It seems so funny how fearful the city people can be of this region. We've found the people to be very gentle, warm, and real. They do have tribal tattoos more up here. In fact, I've always seen tatoos as silly. Here, because of their tribal affiliation, I've switched to actually enjoying seeing people wearing their tattoos proudly.

Frida Berrigan's disarmament article was good. I know there was a lot of hope when Obama got into power (or Kevin Rudd in Australia) that things would change from war mongering to a more holistic approach to life. Unfortunately, once people are in a position of power, it seems they become blind to all the good in life, and deaf to the still small voice of their conscience....

Sheri Ellery
Whirmaki, New Zealand

Scott,
A special grace to be mentioned in your meditation on the quandary of the flag.... It's not easy to predict the moment when conscience will make its claims. The history below is drawn largely from a letter that I sent [in 2005] to Bishop William Lori of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut. That letter was never answered.

My vocation as a Catholic high school teacher is now in its twenty-fifth year. Since 1999, I have taught English literature at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport. Throughout that time, I have worked to take seriously that universal affirmation of St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians that "**there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**"

... Dr. Margaret Dames, Superintendent of School of the Diocese of Bridgeport, explicitly stated that I would be dismissed from my employment...if I refused to permanently display the flag of the United States of America in the class room to which I am assigned....

To concur in this policy would be to act against my conscience as a believing Roman Catholic Christian.

My teaching can never take its legitimacy from any symbol except the Cross of Christ. To elevate any national emblem to that level would be for me to ignore the fundamental call of Jesus to compassion without boundaries. Although I have explained to any who have asked concerning the absence of the flag from my classroom, I have never demanded that any colleague or student imitate the practice merely upon my example. Rather, I offer it up as reflecting my own prayerful consideration of what my faith requires of me. For me, an essential element of the mission of Catholic education is to offer evidence of the practice of nonviolent peacemaking and principled resistance to nationalism that have been nourished and expressed within our tradition.

...The application of this policy requiring the flag in my classroom... along with the extreme penalty attached for refusing it, creates the unmistakable impression that national loyalty is being valued over faithful obedience to the Gospel....

On the morning of September 13th, I removed the flag from my classroom for one last time.... Students and colleagues embraced me...reminding me of why I came to teach in the first place, and of why I am leaving now. It was my last lesson for them.

Stephen Vincent Kobasa
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Scott,
[June/July 2010] was a good issue of the CR. I especially liked your article on the flag. Thanks for drawing attention to what I think is a *very* important issue.

On this topic, here is something I wrote for our local paper, which they didn't print:

> I see flags everywhere. I see them outside public buildings, but also outside private homes and inside churches. I see them on bumper stickers and on highway bridges, and even little ones on the uniforms of college and professional athletes.
>
> What does it mean, all these flags flying everywhere? A visitor to this country might get the impression that the flag is the most sacred and revered object in American society. A reader of the Bible might conclude that Americans are idolatrous. But instead of a golden calf, they worship a piece of colored cloth.

Since writing that, I have come across a book that explores in great detail the meaning of the flag, **Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the Flag**. The author, Carolyn Marvin, argues that nationalism is the most powerful religion in the US today, and that the flag has a power and presence for its believers that is comparable to the medieval crucifix. (People die for the flag today the way they once did for the crucifix). Marvin is very much a secular academic and the book is quite

dense at times, but well worth the effort for the insights it gives.

Gene Burkart
Waltham, Massachusetts

Dear Friends,
Thanks for the *Radical*. We're hoping the oil doesn't reach us here in St. Pete. Paz.

Robert Curnow
St. Petersburg, Florida

Editor's Note: On the day this letter arrived, oil washed up on the beaches of St. Petersburg. The Boston Globe *reported the spill could decimate New England's catch of bluefin tuna which spawns in the Gulf during spring. We pray the devastating spill will spur the development of renewable energy sources.*

Hello Everyone who writes for *The Catholic Radical*,
Thank you so much for putting together this amazing newsletter. It touches my heart that there is a voice of truth out there that stands up to injustice and truly cares.

I am so moved that people write in support of Palestine, as the media influences people's minds so much that they accept Israel's destructive ways. We need voices like Jonathan Ben Artzi, people who are Jewish who come forward and say that they do not support Israel's violent actions against Palestine.

I was also so touched by the article by Reverend Mark Seifried, "Standing Up for the Innocent." It so much resonates with how I feel. It hurts my heart to know that there are so many innocent people in jail—so much injustice.

Thank you for continuing to share the voices of the oppressed and minorities—at least someone is speaking up! I wish it would be the main voice in the mainstream media; the truth needs to be heard and shared and suffering not be denied—otherwise there won't be change.

I am the other, we are the other; as long as one person is treated unjustly and violated there is no peace for anyone.

Anja Daniel
Deerfield, Massachusetts

Dear Scott & Claire & All the Others,
....Do you ever hear of any other folks in Vermont who are keen to discuss a rural CW up here? We are in occasional touch with Martha Hennessey [Dorothy Day's granddaughter] about this. If you know anyone keen to pursue this kind of life—or even wanting to visit, let us know.

Annette Hyder & Chris Goss
65 Bony Woods Road
Barnet, Vermont 05821

Dear Scott,
Recently, Dr. David O'Brien gave a talk here at St. Mary's on Catholic Americanism. Where is it going? How is it changing? Where do the nuns fit in?

Since he mentioned the Catholic Worker, I spoke to him afterwards and told him I receive your newsletter. He told me he was one of your teachers ....

He mentioned in his talk that his son is the mayor of Worcester. I hope he is helping solve some of the problems you face there every day.

Sister Mary Donoghue
St. Mary of the Woods, IN

Editor's Note: David O'Brien taught history at the College of the Holy Cross until he retired in 2008. He introduced many students to the Catholic Worker Movement. His son, Joe, is the most progressive mayor of Worcester we have known

Dear Scott,
Thanks for another issue of the newsletter.

... Pablo Picasso's '52 flag, that he created [with guns and airplanes] before I was born, is still so real today. Your reference to Colonel Chivington's quote" "Nits make lice" [regarding his order to kill Native American children] was an excellent reflection. Fighting "terrorism" goes way back, no? The article by Frida Berrigan [on nuclear disarmament] was excellent....

I was shocked to see Israel's attack on the ships trying to give aid to the Palestinians.... "Take Away Israel's car keys"!

Rev. Mark Seifried's article is fantastic. It's always refreshing when those who understand the system expose the truth of it.

From here through tunneled gloom
the track forms into two:
And one of these wheels onward
into darkening hills,
And one toward distant seas.
—Walter De La Mare

Scott Perkins
Indian Town, Florida

Catholic Worker Calendar

August 6 — Hiroshima Day Vigil: Join us on the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Japan. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Worcester's City Hall.

August 9, 23, & September 13, 27—Mass: Join us in prayer at 7:30 P.M. (Aug. 23 Mass with Bishop Rueger is at 7 P.M.) 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

September 14 —Vigil to Remove ROTC: Join us on the Feast of the Holy Cross in front of Dinand Library at Holy Cross College to call for an end to military training on Catholic campuses. Noon to 1 P.M.

September 22—US Social Forum: Please come hear youth from the Worcester Roots Project report on the national gathering of activists held in Detroit, Michigan. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

August 20 & September 17—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer/ Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street in Worcester.

August 13 & September 3—Vigil Against War & Abortion: Join us for a vigil starting outside the US military recruiting station on Park Ave. and ending across from the Planned Parenthood building on Pleasant St. in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

For more information: call 508 753-3588 or email theresecw2@gmail.com.

Mason Street Musings

The morning after I heard a homily urging me to look for the Holy Spirit in unexpected places, I awoke to Scott announcing there were bed bugs in one of the rooms upstairs. His declaration marked the beginning of a weeks-long battle waged against critters barely visible to the naked eye. Tactics of the fight included hours of vacuuming and scrubbing floors, countless trips to the laundromat, and buying expensive covers for all our mattresses. We called Ben the exterminator, not once but *three* times.

"It's an epidemic. They're all over the city," he said laconically and then proceeded to describe the means of invasion. Backpacks. Luggage. Used furniture. One bug had even entered a posh condominium on the laptop of an unsuspecting salesman.

At night, I got into the habit of examining mattresses and bed frames with our dim flashlights. Our guest, James, who was badly bitten, applied baking soda to his "wounds" and those of our guest, Katrina. When bugs were discovered in her room, we sealed her belongings in black plastic trash bags and hauled her newly covered mattress into the kitchen far away from the wooden bed frame, apparently a bed bug haven.

Mid-battle, James told us about the extraordinary exit of a great uncle who died in the early nineteen hundreds. Relatives got so drunk at the man's funeral they knocked over the candles sitting atop his casket, setting it on fire. To avoid burning down the house, the carousing mourners tossed the flaming coffin out the window. We might want to do the same with our infested beds advised James. I loved the idea. But hurling beds out the window is not possible in the city,so we lugged contaminated frames down the back porch stairs, hacked them into pieces and gleefully burned them. Our

Grace Duffy

guests now sleep on metal framed beds which are less hospitable to bed bugs.

Our plague erupted days before a long-planned celebration for our children honoring birthdays, graduations, personal achievements. Scott scoured and painted the porches. With James' help, we festooned the garden with paper lanterns and tiki torches. Our revelers celebrated outside and most were clueless about the battle that had been raging on the second-floor.

The next day, I began obsessively tracking news reports of a raid by Israeli commandos on a flotilla carrying humanitarian aid to the sealed- off Gaza Strip. Nine activists were killed and more than thirty wounded. Our government's lack of inquiry into the attack (Americans were among the passengers) disturbed me. I should know better. Governments are fickle lovers quite willing to cast aside anyone whose actions conflict with their national security agenda. It is not the passport or narrow claim of citizenry that will protect us but "our lives," argues Alice Walker in her wise essay on the flotilla raid, "How we have lived them; what battles with love and compassion our only shield, we have engaged."

As I write, the Northeast wilts beneath a July heat wave. Our cat lolls for hours in the coolest spot she can find. Children and guests sit and sweat beside the fans uselessly spinning hot air. Only the heat-loving plants in the garden flourish—the tomatoes, the hot peppers, and the basil growing in buckets. To my amazement, they nightly sprout clusters of leaves. Tomorrow, I will pick some to make into pesto for supper. After dark, we'll take out the breviaries and say night prayer on the upstairs back porch while neighborhood fireworks pop all around us.

I miss James who moved out a month ago. Quoting a passage from Thessalonians, he once said to me, "**Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**" God is in all, James believes, and he is right. God is in the bed bugs, in the witness of courageous activists, and in the luxurious basil. Ω

Claire

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